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HISTORY OF WESTFIELD.

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S E R M O N,

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AT THE REMODELLING OF THEIR HOUSE OF WORSHIP.

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S E R M O N .

O GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD.—Psalms cvii. 1.

- FEW, perhaps, in any age or clime, knew more of the goodness of God as displayed in his works, or felt more sincerely the obligation of rendering thanks unto him for his goodness and mercy, than he who was inspired to write our text.

Let us notice a few instances of God's goodness which demand our special gratitude.

I. *The goodness of God is displayed in the work of Creation and Redemption.* Both display more of the perfections of Deity than any other two achievements of Jehovah revealed to man. In the one, we hear his voice in godlike sublimity, saying in the midst of chaotic confusion, "Let there be light." At another stroke of his power the firmament of heaven appears, gemmed with countless suns and systems, each fixed in its orbit to roll on and be admired by created intelligences, so many badges of his eternal power and wisdom. The material universe with all its indescribable glories, God did not intend to enjoy alone, and hence he formed man immortal like himself, to be a participator of the scene.

Awhile, he enjoys the rapturous view and the holy festivities of paradise ; but in an evil hour transgression drives him out, a subject of disease, sorrow, and death. This opened the way for the richest display of divinity the universe has ever seen, in the plan of redemption by the death of Christ. But did not the morning stars sing together, and the sons of God shout for joy over the infant universe ? What greater work has God ever performed ?

Be it, that the work of creation displays the grandeur of Omnipotence in forming innumerable worlds and hanging them upon nothing, so balancing them by two forces, that, in all their immense revolutions, they could not deviate in the least from their orbits ; be it, his wisdom and benevolence shine in so shaping their form, that light and heat by their diurnal revolutions are afforded their inhabitants for their comfort and happiness ; be it, as astronomers tell us, that this vast world is but a speck in the immensity of the Creator's works, and should it be annihilated it might not be missed by other worlds ; that within our solar system are worlds more than a thousand times larger than ours : that a sister planet is encircled by a ring that would enclose five hundred worlds as large as our own ; that scattered over the universe are innumerable suns a million times larger than our earth, with their countless groups of planets revolving round them ; be it, that the universe is boundless to human comprehension ; that the throne of God is in the centre of his vast domain ; that ten thousand times ten thousand worlds revolve round his throne as their ultimate centre ; that our sun, which has one planet that revolves round it in an orbit of about one hundred millions of miles, carrying also a whole family of worlds, herself five hundred times larger than all of them, is flying in her orbit around that throne, attended by constellation after constellation in their tremendous sweep through the immensity of space, at ve-

locities already discovered of 880,000 miles per hour. At such a universe, no wonder the angels of light, as they looked out of the windows of heaven on the immensity of God's creation, sang and 'shouted for joy.'

But another work of the same Almighty hand raises greater wonder in heaven, and a loftier, sweeter song on earth, from the same happy throng. At the ushering in of the infant Redeemer, Heaven pours a light on the dark hills and plains of Judea, to the amazement of the artless shepherds, and Heaven's eternal choir descends and sings, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will to men." Glory in the *highest* is now the song. Let a note be struck as much higher as the work of redemption surpasses that of creation. In the work of creation matter was brought from chaos into organized forms; but in the work of redemption, souls are raised from a condition worse than nothing to themselves, up to the dignity of the sons of God. And over the eternal benefits derived, the redeemed will sing the angel's song, "Glory to God in the highest," when sun, and moon, and stars, have set in eternal night. The one could be accomplished by a word without resistance; the other was begun almost coeval with man's transgression and was consummated on Calvary, so far as Christ's death was concerned, amid agonies that appalled the material universe, with earth and hell in opposition from the first to the last.

In the one, God appears in his majesty, forming countless worlds from nothing, and garnishing them in splendor, making mountains and vales, streams and oceans, sing his greatness; in the other, he appears in humility for our instruction, taking upon him the form of a servant, condescending to be smitten for our offences, led as a lamb to the slaughter, bruised for our iniquities, and crucified for our sins. In the one, he attracts the admiring gaze of a world

as they behold the circumambient heavens sparkling with worlds, the bow of promise with its brilliant hues, the burnished clouds, the fruits of earth, and the flowers of the field ; in the other, he appears in no form of comeliness, to be desired by a depraved world. In the one, God's terrestrial benevolence shines in forming the mind and body fearfully and wonderfully, in adapting all the physical laws to make them happy, in the innumerable forms of variety, in the changing seasons adapted to all the senses ; in the other, eternal beneficence appears, in preparing a way more richly to bless the soul here and forever. In the one, he has hidden valuable laws of matter to be discovered by man for his good through all coming time ; in the other, he has magnified the most valuable of all laws, crushed and trampled upon by man, and thereby opened an inexhaustible fountain to bless souls for ever and ever. In the one, he glorified his power amid cherubic legions ; in the other, he laid aside the glories of eternity, and consented to be dragged by a merciless rabble from tribunal to tribunal, arraigned as a criminal and condemned as a malefactor, and executed as a miscreant. In the one, he gives life to innumerable beings ; in the other, he voluntarily laid down his own life.

" Heaven wept that man might smile, Heaven bled that man
Might live forever."

The one, was accomplished in six days ; the other, although almost as many thousand years have rolled away, is not yet completed.

Two advents of the immaculate Redeemer to this guilty world were needful. In the first he suffered what finite beings can never comprehend. Yet the moment the Saviour rises from this world of sin from Mount Olivet, decked in a cloud of glory, angelic escorts attend him upward, heaven's everlasting doors are lifted up, and the King of glory takes his throne, while the heavenly hallelujahs in swelling peals

are heard around him. John had a vision of the heavenly oratorio, and gives us the following report :—" I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." In the last advent, having finished the work of intercession, he will come as the Judge of this vast world, and wind up the drama of time. Angels will attend him ; heaven earth and hell will be moved, his elect will be gathered, his bride robbed for immortality, and death and hell chained to his chariot wheels, and he in triumph ascend with his saints, as the universal conqueror, while bursting praises are heard in all worlds but one.

His first advent was to make an atonement for sin, his second will be to sweep from the earth every vestage of iniquity. In the first, the ungodly triumphed, in the second they will be fearfully destroyed. At the first, saints were persecuted, scattered and slain ; in the second, they will triumph and take their crowns and eternal honors. The first was the seed-time of the Gospel, the other will be the harvest of the world. Christ died for our sins ; where is there a parallel to this ? He died to avert the consequences of sin ; for without the shedding of blood there is no remission ! In the plan of redemption, love and mercy were brought to light as they never had been before. No wonder the commemorative part of the Sabbath should pass from the seventh to the first day with no fuller explanation. The elect angels had seen power and justice displayed by the Almighty, but no mercy followed a part of their once happy brotherhood when they were cast down to hell, " Reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the

judgment of the great day." No wonder they desire to look into this ocean of mercy shoreless and fathomless, because finite beings can never comprehend Infinity.

"With joy, with grief, that healing hand I see.
The skies it formed, and yet it bled for me."

II. *From the earliest ages God's goodness has been manifested in befriending his saints.* It cheered Abel and Noah, Lot and Moses, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in their conflicts. When his people needed divine help, he often stepped forth from the hiding place of his power, and miraculously aided them. In the pillar of a cloud by day, and in the pillar of fire by night, in the desolating plagues on Pharaoh and his host, and in their final overthrow in the march of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt to their entrance into Canaan, amidst hunger and thirst, savage beasts and savage men, God's goodness was strikingly manifest in protecting them, even to the destruction of their foes. At the hand of Moses he sends water from the flinty rock, and at the hand of Joshua he stops the sun in the heavens. One angel he sends to deliver Daniel from the lion's den, and another angel walks in the flaming furnace as a comforter, while the God of angels is delivering the three Hebrew worthies. The gift of tongues at the day of pentecost, and the opening of prisons closed upon his followers, are among some of the many miraculous displays of infinite goodness to man.

God has often given skill and foresight to persons of his own selection, to accomplish his designs. Thus Moses was prepared to be Israel's leader. Bezaleel and Aholiab were taught to build the tabernacle, and Hiram was endowed with extraordinary skill to build the temple. Thus too Nehemiah was armed with the whole panoply of heaven, to lead back the poor captive Jews, and rebuild their ruined

city, and in after days Paul was raised up as a leading missionary with a boldness and zeal that never failed him, and Peter was taught by a vision to spread the gospel through the Gentile world.

Leaving Scriptural history, we have abundant other proofs of God's goodness to his church. No sooner had the apostles began their work of mercy than all Paganism was in arms against the religion of Jesus. The Emperor Caligula, holding supremacy over all Christians as he supposed, ordered every house of worship to be closed on the penalty of the death of the whole Jewish nation. The church then so feeble, had not God interposed, had all been slain. But he suddenly called this inhuman monarch from earth, and the churches had rest throughout Judea and Galilee and were greatly multiplied. Nero like a fiend of darkness next arises to destroy the saints, and in the sixty-sixth year of the Christian era, slew the apostle Paul, but God cut short his days. Though God came out in judgment against the Jews, overthrew their city, and destroyed more than a million of them, yet in a miraculous manner, almost every Christian was spared. Though the emperors Trajan, Julian, Nero, Dioclesian and Caligula caused the blood of saints to flow like water, still the church spread rapidly. It was God who stopped the mouths of lions, burst the bars of prisons, and palsied the arm of her persecutors. Why did not Constantine, though the professed friend of the church, destroy it by uniting it with State? Why did not Mahomet with all his hostile military retinue, break in pieces the little kingdom? Why did not the blood thirsty Inquisition with its prophetic iron teeth destroy the followers of the Lamb? In thirty years she did destroy one hundred and fifty thousand, but a remnant was spared. In the midst of Papal darkness and cruelty, God raised up a Martin Luther. With a purpose inflexible, and a soul filled with the love of God, unmoved at Papal anathemas, he wielded the

sword of truth, and the first blow that he struck made the beast roar with a wound destined to be fatal. About this period, in the valley of Piedmont at the foot of the Alps, there lived a large number of Waldenses, who alone on earth maintained pure religion, having never swerved from the faith and practice of the apostles. Catholic persecution at last burst upon them. Four hundred of them were smoked from the caves on the side of the mountain where they had concealed themselves, and were butchered in the snow. Two hundred and fifty of these Waldenses left for the shores of England in the eleventh century, and because they would not submit to the Pope, they were branded with red hot irons in their foreheads, and scourged through the streets of Oxford. All were forbidden to receive them into their houses, and through the inclemency of the winter most of them perished.

But through the goodness of God, Christianity spread rapidly in the British empire, and with it Papal superstition and oppression raged. I cannot stop to detail death upon death that rolled the garments of saints in blood, and carried terror and dismay through the nation. Suffice it to say, through God's blessing, the wrath of man was made to praise him; for the flames that burnt her martyrs, lighted up a holy light that will never go out. It was that persecution that sent the Church to the wilds of America. Here she has spread with such a rapidity, that, in contemplating her march we are as those who dream; and she will spread, till, like the tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, her height has reached the heavens and her beauty the ends of the earth. What reason have we to thank God and take courage, for the Church has come forth from racks and dungeons, persecution and death, with her garments made white in the blood of the Lamb; and amid all her trials she has sung, "O, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good," and she will sing that soul-satisfying song down through the mil-

lenium ; she will sing it at the gate of death and the gate of heaven, and then the echo will die away in her eternal song.

III. *The goodness of God has been richly displayed in the history of this town.** Less than two hundred years ago, this town was a howling wilderness. No voice of the white man broke the silence of the morning. No hum of business, no beautiful works of the artist, no ties of civilized friendship, no true praise to God was here. And yet there was a praise more pure than the contaminated praises of men. It was not the war-whoop of the savage, nor his horrid orgies around the council fire ; it was not the howl of the wolf, the growl of the bear, or the scream of the catamount. *It was nature in her solemn wildness.* It was the waving of the primeval forest. It was the whisperings of the breeze, falling into this vale, from the cloud-capt mountains around it. It was the ceaseless murmurings of our streams in nature's great anthem. But God has purposes to accomplish here, and thither he sends the white man in the midst of dangers to reclaim the wilderness.

WESTFIELD (or *Warronoco*, as the Indians called it), embracing once what is now Southwick and Russell, was the strong-hold of the savage. The great abundance of salmon, bass, shad, and trout, with which our rivers abounded, together with bears, deer, moose, and other game that filled the forest, rendered this perhaps the most desirable spot in New England for the Indians. A little south of this village, in the part now called Squawfield, there is abundance of evidence from the arrows and other articles the Indians use, that they cultivated, to some degree, that part of this valley. A number of those relics

* For the historical facts I am indebted to Rev. Dr. Davis' Historical Sketches, and to the Town and Church Records.

are preserved, among other curiosities, in our Academy. To leave a home like this, was not without a struggle.

The King of England gave all the land embraced in this town and Springfield, to the inhabitants of Springfield, and they gave successive grants to individuals to settle in this place.

In 1658, a tract of land was officially granted to Thomas Cooper, on condition he improved it within one year, and continued so to do for the space of five years. This land lay near the county bridge. In 1660 a similar grant was made to Deacon S. Chapman, of land adjoining Cooper's. In 1661 a grant was made to Capt. Pincheon, Robert Ashley, and George Colton, of land lying between the rivers, embracing probably what is now our village. In 1669 this town was incorporated, and called Westfield, from the fact it was then the most westerly plantation in New England.

Similar grants were made to Isaac Phelps, Capt. Cook, Mr. Cornish, Thomas Dewey, J. Noble, David Ashley, John Holyoke, John Ponder, and John Ingersol. These men lived near the confluence of Great and Little Rivers. They took up their residence here in 1666.

The first regular meeting on the Sabbath was held in 1667. Tradition has it, that a little previous to all this, three young men set up a trading-house with the Indians on the eastern border of this town, spent one summer here, and were never heard of more. Though each man had a separate tract of land, such were those perilous times, they had to cultivate it in common. Near the junction of Great and Little Rivers they erected a fort in which they lodged by night, and to which they fled by day in case of alarm. A tract of land about two miles in extent was strongly enclosed. In 1690 the town assembled, raised a sum of money by which they sent some of their bravest sons to destroy the savages who were constantly harrassing them.

Houses at this time were occupied as forts in different parts of the town. A balustrade was erected upon the roof, from which they could fire upon the enemy.

We, who are situated in our peaceful homes, ought never to forget those dark and trying days of our fathers, and that this beautiful vale was bought with their blood. In those mournful days, never to be forgotten by a grateful posterity, our fathers were only a few families in the all surrounding wilderness, the haunt of the bear and the panther, and men more savage than they. A few habitations of civilized men were found in Northampton, Hadley, Springfield, and in Windsor, Ct. All the West and the immediate vicinity was a forest, filled, for aught they could know, with thousands of hostile savages. They could not rely on these places for help, almost as helpless as themselves. Surely they could not then say with England's gifted bard,

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore."

No; at every step in the forest there was enough to make the very flesh crawl; for the catamount might be waiting to bound upon them from above, and the savage might be hidden behind the tree, to give the more sure and deadly blow. Even these beautiful streams that then environed them, murmured daily and nightly, danger and death every where. With their fire arms by their side, they felled the forest and tilled the earth, and slept in their log houses, while in turn some were standing as sentinels.

No great harm befel the first settlers until Philip's war in 1675. A more able, artful, and furious warrior than Philip rarely haunted the forest. He was seldom seen by the white man, except in the distant council-fire, the bloody massacre, and in the conflagration of cottages and forts. Probably there was not a settlement of the English in all New England unknown to him and his warriors, and their purpose was their utter extermination.

Near the spot where our paper-mill now stands, our fathers erected a grist-mill and saw-mill. And as the inhabitants of Springfield frequented these mills, many of them were slain on their way. In this town, the houses of Cornish and Sackett, Fowler and Lee, were laid in ashes by the Indians. Loomis and Bentley, and a Miss Sackett, were among captives known to have been taken. A number were killed, but their names are not left us. Grey Lock, by whose consummate subtlety, two of the above captives were taken, is the only Indian that patrolled this region, whose name was known. Now at Pochossuck, then at the Shepard lane crossing, around the fort, nay, everywhere hostilities awaited our fathers. Their lives were in danger constantly. Can we wonder that this feeble band, scantily fed and clad, with no mortal arm to protect them, were on the eve of despair, and about to give up their homes and flee for safety?

Such was the fact, and a less noble and courageous race would have done it. But He who was the sole stay of our afflicted sires in those trying days, intervened, and held back the blood-thirsty savage, sent reinforcements and gave them final success. Some other of the first permanent settlers were Sackett, Ashley, Fowler, Weller and Neal, from whom some of our valuable citizens have descended. In the French and Indian wars, a draft was made on Westfield for soldiers, and some of her sons perished in those battles. Among the number, Major Noah Ashley stands pre-eminent. He fell in 1775 between Fort Edward and Lake George. No man in our early history stood so prominent as a civilian, as the Hon. Wm. Shepard. Under Gen. Abercrombie at the age of 22, he received the commission of Captain, and continued in the French war six years; was in the battles fought at Fort William Henry, Ticonderoga, Crown Point, Isle aux Noix, St. Johns, and Montreal. In 1775 he held the office of Lieut. Colonel, and stood high in the confi-

dence of Gen. Washington, in the revolutionary struggle. In 1780 he was appointed General, and held that rank to the close of the war. When the war was over, like the Roman Cincinnatus, and our immortal Washington, he retired here to his farm. He was chosen one of our State Senators and Representative to Congress, and held the office of Deacon 28 years. We love to chronicle the success of good men, and embalm their names in grateful remembrance. This town from the first, was favored with men who felt deeply the importance of education. For many years they gathered all their children into one general school, and employed a man, as a general thing who could teach the Classics, and rewarded him more liberally than is common at this day. It is believed no child was left too ignorant to read or write.

The Westfield Academy was chartered in 1796, and opened for pupils in 1800. It has usually stood among the highest of Academies in the State. Its funds are about \$5000. Many thousands have been educated there, many of whom are among the brightest ornaments of the world. Not far from fifty have been liberally educated from this town, many of whom have stood high in the church and state.

The Normal School was located here in 1844, and the present edifice was erected in 1846, at an expense of about \$6000. About one hundred and thirty towns in eleven counties have been represented, and we are confident it will not suffer in comparison with any institution of the kind in existence. God has owned and blessed it temporally and spiritually, and may his blessings never be withdrawn.

The religious history of this town is fraught with deep interest. The first religious exercises of the primitive settlers were conducted by a Mr. Holyoke. A Mr. Fiske preached for a time as a candidate for settlement. For more than half a century the inhabitants were assembled for

worship, at the beat of a drum. The first meeting-house is supposed to have stood in what is now the bed of Little river. A second house was erected in 1720, which afterwards was burnt. The present Congregational Church was erected in 1805. In 1679 the present Congregational Church was organized. The first pastor, Rev. E. Taylor, was settled the same year. He died in 1729. For four or five years previous to his death, he was unable to preach. His successor was the Rev. N. Bull, who was ordained in 1726, and died in 1740. Rev. J. Ballentine, the next pastor was ordained in 1741, and died in 1776. Rev. N. Atwater, the next pastor was ordained in 1781, and died in 1802. Rev. T. Knapp, the next pastor was ordained in 1803, and died in 1847. The present pastor, Rev. Dr. Davis, was ordained in 1836. During the ministry of these clergymen, there were added to the church as follows: through the labors of Mr. Taylor, 189; through Mr. Bull, 226; through Mr. Ballantine, 412; through Mr. Atwater, 123; through Mr. Knapp, 657; through Dr. Davis, 429. The present number of the church, is 429.

The first Baptist Church collected in this place, was organized in 1784. Its pastor was Rev. Adam Hamilton. Owing to misconduct, he was deposed from the ministry, and the little church he gathered were soon scattered. Their house of worship stood near the County Bridge. A new Church was organized in 1806, with eighteen members. The house they occupied was about half a mile east of our present place of worship. Rev. A. Hawks was their first pastor. In 1812, a revival brought sixty into the church. After this they were destitute of a pastor for some time. In 1818, Rev. C. Green was ordained and remained with it as pastor one year. Rev. D. Wright was the immediate successor of Mr. Green, and remained their pastor about seven years, and was followed by Rev. A. Smith. Owing to a variety of causes, a secession of twenty members took place

in 1833, who formed themselves into what is now our church, under Mr. Smith as their pastor. In 1836 this new church settled Rev. D. Wright as their pastor, and he remained with them four years. The meeting-house in which we are now assembled, was erected in 1838. Rev. C. Van Loon was settled over this church in 1839, and dismissed in eighteen months. Rev. F. Bestor was settled in 1840, and dismissed in 1841. Rev. C. Van Loon was re-settled here in 1842, and after less than a year's labor, left on account of ill health, and soon died in the State of New York. Rev. A. Colburn, his successor was settled in 1842, and dismissed in 1843. Rev. N. M. Perkins was settled in 1844, and dismissed in 1848. Rev. J. Alden was settled in 1849. During Rev. Mr. Wright's ministry, the church, previous to the secession, reached nearly to 200 members. The old church from which the secession was made, has long since ceased to act in a church capacity, and has become almost extinct, as might have been expected from the inactive policy pursued. During Rev. Mr. Smith's ministry, seventeen were added. During Rev. C. Van Loon's ministry, 81. During Mr. Colburn's stay 48 were added. During Mr. Perkins' labors, 34. During the present pastor's labors, 51. The present number is about 165.

The Baptist Church at the West Farms, was organized in 1819, and their meeting-house was built in 1820. Rev. D. Wright was their first pastor who has been succeeded by Messrs. Childs, Bestor, Day, Smith, and Underwood. During the settlement of some of these pastors, there have been revivals and a goodly number added. Present number, 66.

The Methodist denomination commenced their worship in this town about 1794. The first preacher was Dr. Roberts, who was followed by the Rev. J. Taylor. Westfield was at this time included in the Granville Circuit. A church was first organized at the West Parish, in 1806, and a meeting-house built in 1829. The Methodist church in

this village was organized in 1812, with seventeen members. Their meeting-house on Main street, was built in 1834. The house of worship they now occupy, was built in 1842.

From 1795 to 1812, this village was a circuit station, and hence we cannot find out the number added to this particular station from their records. I can therefore only give the different preachers who have been settled here. The following I believe is a perfect list in the order of their settlement, both for the Centre and West Parish. No notice is taken of their reappointments to return, which happened in large number of instances. Commencing with 1812, the following are the list: Rev. R. Harris, Thorp. P. Muzzey, C. Culver, B. Goodsit, S. Dayton, B. Hibbard, D. Miller, C. Carpenter, T. Clark, R. Sceny, A. M. Cain, S. Eighmy, Hatfield, G. Pierce, N. Rice, P. C. Oakley, J. Allen, E. Osborne, C. F. Pelton, L. Mead, J. Nickson, E. Otis, J. Haskell, D. Lisle, S. Esten, T. W. Tucker, E. Scott, P. Townsend, W. Smith, Benj. McLowth, J. Mudge, T. W. Gile, M. Trafton, H. S. Degon, J. Ricketts, N. Merrill, M. Raymond, J. B. Husted, G. F. Cox, S. Best, and J. H. Twombly, their present pastor. The present number of the Central Church is 237, and that of the West Parish about 50.

In 1843 a number seceded from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and formed a Wesleyan Methodist Church. Their preachers were Rev. E. Scott, E. Brewer, J. L. Gross, C. O. Town, and J. Wright. They occupied the old Methodist meeting-house where they met for worship. The number of their Church is now 19.

Thus it appears that we have seven church organizations with an aggregate of almost a thousand professors. Of the five Churches which now observe the ordinances, we have nominally 947 members.

It is not a little remarkable, that the Congregational Church have buried all their past pastors in this town, and neither of the other Churches have buried one in their

midst. For 105 years the Congregational Church was the only church in this town. Many were her early trials, great her responsibility, and manifold her success. My impressions are, that during her entire history, as much liberality of views, and kindness of action has prevailed, as is generally found. She has kept steadily on in her duties, has not been fickle in regard to her pastors ; and she has seen other churches rise and fall in her presence apparently unenvied, until in the aggregate, they have surpassed her in numbers, and we cannot doubt but that she prays for their spiritual welfare. Doubtless the prosperity of either of these village churches, aids the others, and the wane of either darkens the prospects of the rest. It requires all the seraphic combined power of ardent piety in them all, to keep religion in the ascendant, in these degenerate times. While all rivalry and boasting is excluded, we can say with gratitude to God, that since the Methodist and Baptist Churches erected their present houses of worship in this village, they have been abundantly blessed ; nor can we see that they will suffer in comparison with the Congregational Church, taking her whole history into view.

And now, situated as we are, upon a soil rich and fertile, and adapted to all fruits grown in New England—surrounded as we are by natural scenery seldom equalled, and scarcely surpassed on earth, with a quiet, flourishing, and a beautiful village in the midst of it, a village where aristocracy finds it difficult to marshal herself—a place sought out as an asylum of science by the State, where they have chartered two Institutions of learning, and more than that all, a place owned and blessed of God remarkably with precious revivals from time immemorial, if any people have occasion to thank God for his mercies, we are that people. We as a church have abundant reason to thank God for past mercies. Within the last twelve years this church has more than tripled its members, and tried to bear her part with Christians

around her, in blessing the place and the world. Shall we not, my brethren, henceforth maintain a closer walk with God, and press on with unwavering steps to the bloodless conquest of the world? We have great reason for gratitude that there has been such great harmony and readiness on the part of our Church and Society, to meet the expenses of our repairs so promptly.

It becomes us now, after all the anxiety and toil pertaining to the improvements made in this sanctuary, to enjoy them by consecrating them all to God. The offering is none too good for Him who gave his all for us. God forbid we should idolize any thing that is here. Let us rather humbly and thankfully give it to Him who eternally owned it.

To God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we now consecrate all we have done to improve this sanctuary and implore the blessing of the whole Trinity to rest upon us and our offering. May the Almighty Father ever throw around us his protecting arm and light up our path-way to eternity.

May the Son, our blessed Redeemer, here see the travail of his soul, and be ever enthroned in the hearts of his followers as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and sinners drawn by his deathless love, be brought by the spirit of all grace, to try the efficacy of his atoning blood.

May the Holy Spirit ever be here to enlighten, to sanctify and comfort and save. By his power may souls be awakened—stubborn wills subdued, the tempted succored—the weak supported—the self righteous rebuked—and prodigals in all their wretchedness and woe brought back to their Father's house.

Finally, we make the consecration to the Church of God. Here may her faith, and her love, and her songs, and her prayers abound. Here may the Spirit constantly descend to refresh and comfort her, and enable her to act prayerfully and nobly her part, until she is called from her militant state to rest forever in the Paradise of God.

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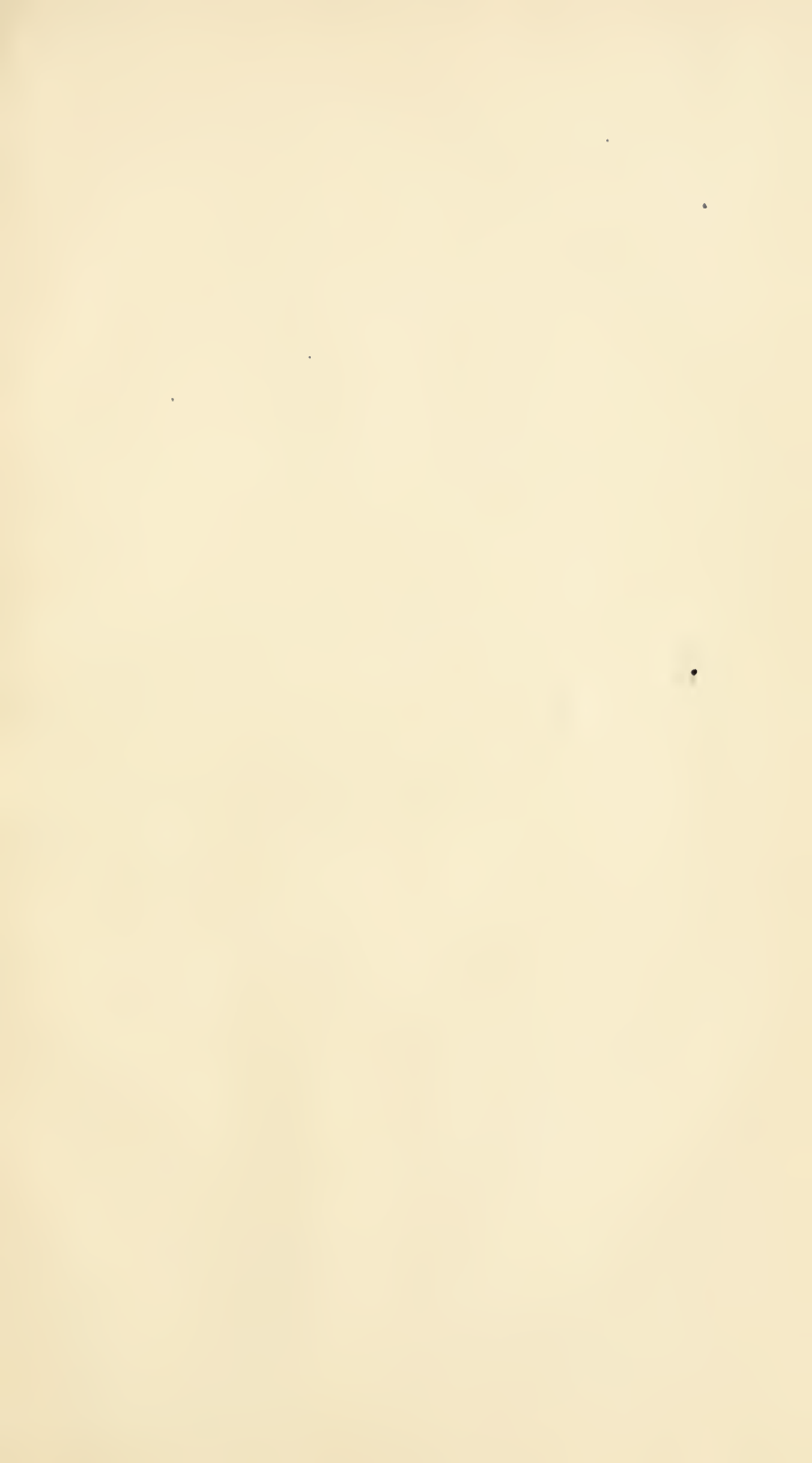
BY REV. JOHN ALDEN,
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